

## Today's News - Wednesday, December 17, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tomorrow is this week's "floating" no-newsletter day. We'll be back Friday, December 19.

- Wainwright reports from "inside Beijing's airpocalypse," where 21 million people "appear to be engaged in a city-wide rehearsal for life on an inhospitable planet. Only it's not a rehearsal" - their "airmageddon" has arrived (an incredible read!).
- Queensland's deputy premier orders a Brisbane council "to remove future sea-level rise from its planning regulations - as certainty over future sea-level rise increases, planning protections are being wound back right across Australia" (whaaaaat?!?).
- Eyefuls of the finalists in the St. Petersburg Pier's second attempt at a competition (after the "contentious rejection of a much-reviled design" of the "The Lens" by Maltzan - remember that debacle?).
- Eyefuls of 3XN's competition-winning Olympic HQ scheme on the shores of Lake Geneva.
- Flint delves deep into the "long list of difficulties Renzo Piano faced" designing the new Harvard Art Museums: "being 'urbanistically correct' can be an expensive and incredibly challenging undertaking...there would be no messing with Le Corbusier, either."
- O'Sullivan reports on why the Mall of Berlin is such a flop: "It's not that Berlin's government and developers don't have the guts to take on major projects to transform the city. It's just that they really suck at them"
- No need to pity Ontario's "poor St. Catharines" anymore: Diamond Schmitt Architects "is putting an indelible mark on our downtown with its visions" that should "do away with any self-doubt the Garden City may ever have felt."
- Rauchwerger offers a lively examination of Mexico City's "Me-Mo" moment in the architectural spotlight.
- After 20 years of mostly "bog-standard steel-and-glass office blocks," a round-up of Russia's Top Six Best Buildings, where "architects have dared to differ and turned bold blueprints into bricks and mortar."
- Snoonian Glenn cheers Bestor's Blackbirds development in L.A. that "hits the right notes for eco-conscious urbanites who are ready for a starter home and want to live in an area that offers a less car-dependent lifestyle."
- Moore has a field day inside Second Home, a "workspace for 'creative nomads'" in London by Serpentine Pavilion winner SelgasCano: it has "lightness and grace as well as invention, and an awareness of when to stop - stopping the playfulness short of kitsch" (we wanna work there!).
- Norfolk, Va., has a new downtown anchor with a new library that incorporates a landmark.
- The AIA and 11 architectural schools sign a three-year partnership to "further explore the notion that building design, city planning and health should go hand in hand."
- The Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture launches a fundraising campaign it says "is the only opportunity to save the school."
- One we couldn't resist: A "Hogwarts" castle is built for China's Hebei Academy of Fine Arts that "will be used by animation students, rather than to house young witches and wizards."
- Eyefuls of the 2014 AR Awards for Emerging Architecture + Eyefuls (and miles and miles) of A' Design Award & Competition 2013 - 2014 winners.
- Call for entries: Gowanus by Design 3rd international design competition.

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Inside Beijing's airpocalypse - a city made 'almost uninhabitable' by pollution: The 21 million inhabitants of China's capital appear to be engaged in a city-wide rehearsal for life on an inhospitable planet. Only it's not a rehearsal...The airpocalypse has arrived...The national "airmageddon" has spawned a host of other attempts to solve the problem, ranging from the miraculous to the madcap. By Oliver Wainwright- [Guardian \(UK\)](#)

Complacency rules as Queensland makes risky edict on sea-level rise: Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney's decision...to order a Brisbane council to remove future sea-level rise from its planning regulations seems a rather short-sighted thing to do...as certainty over future sea-level rise increases, planning protections are being wound back right across Australia. - [The Conversation](#)

St. Petersburg gets first look at pier proposals: After six years of discussions and the selection and contentious rejection of a much-reviled design for a new pier, St. Petersburg is back for a second try. -- [Mesh/FR-EE/Civitas; Alfonso Architects; Yann Weymouth/HOK/Harvard Jolly/Wannemacher Jensen; VOA; ASD; Ross Barney Architects; W Architecture and Landscape Architecture; ahha! Design Group \[images\]](#)- [Tampa Bay Times \(Florida\)](#)

3XN reveals competition-winning Olympic HQ scheme: ...on the shores of Lake Geneva in Lausanne, Switzerland...The 2.4 hectare project -- dubbed Olympic Unity House -- will bring together all of the IOC's 600 staff who are currently spread across five different sites. [\[images\]](#)- [The Architects' Journal \(UK\)](#)

Building the New Harvard Art Museums Was a Story of Many, Many Constraints: The long list of difficulties Renzo Piano faced with this renovation and expansion point to why many architects prefer greenfield builds to infill: ...being "urbanistically correct"...can be an expensive and incredibly challenging undertaking...there would be no messing with Le Corbusier, either. By Anthony Flint [\[images\]](#)- [CityLab \(formerly The Atlantic Cities\)](#)

In Berlin, a Shopping Mall's Flop Leads to Schadenfreude: A group of nightclub owners are now joking about turning the failing Mall of Berlin into a "techno temple." Here's why: Berlin's "grown-up" transformation is not going quite as planned...It's not that [the] government and developers don't have the guts to take on major projects to transform the city. It's just that they really suck at them. By Feargus O'Sullivan- [CityLab \(formerly The Atlantic Cities\)](#)

A diamond in Niagara with a side of fried rice: Poor St. Catharines, the largest urban centre in Niagara Region and nothing to really hang its hat on. Until now...the fact that...Diamond Schmitt Architects is putting an indelible mark on our downtown with its visions for those buildings should do away with any self-doubt the Garden City may ever have felt. By Tiffany Mayer [\[images\]](#)- [Eating Niagara](#)

The Mexican Moment: The Rise of Architecture's Latest Design Capital: Decades have passed since Mexico last received architectural recognition prior to this current wave..."Me-Mo", short for Mexican-Moment...By Daniel Rauchwerger -- [Arquitectura 911sc; Productora; FR-EE/Fernando Romero Enterprise; Tatiana Bilbao; Alberto Kalach; Enrique Norton/TEN Arquitectos; Isaac Broid; Michel Rojkind; Mauricio Rocha; Frida Escobedo; Luis Barragan; Mario Pani; Juan O'Gorman; Felix Candela; Pedro Ramirez Vazquez; Agustin Hernandez; Ricardo Legorreta; Mathias Goeritz; Zeller & Moyer; Emmanuel Picault & Ludwig Godefroy \[images\]](#)- [ArchDaily](#)

Russia's Best Buildings: Our Top Six: The last 20 years of architecture has added little but bog-standard steel-and-glass office blocks to the limited palate of the Russian cityscape...But lately some architects have dared to differ and turned bold blueprints into bricks and mortar. -- [David Adjaye; Totan Kuzembaev; Populous/Buro Happold; Sergey Skuratov](#)- [The Calvert Journal \(UK\)](#)

In Los Angeles, Density That Doesn't Overwhelm: With their new housing project, Blackbirds, an architect and developer strive for a sensitive way to build up a low-slung city: ...hits the right notes for eco-conscious urbanites who are ready for a starter home and want to live in an area that offers a less car-dependent lifestyle. By Deborah

[Snoonian Glenn -- Bestor Architecture \[images\]](#)- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

[Second Home: a good day at the office: This members-only workspace for 'creative nomads' succeeds thanks to the grace and invention of its architects, rising Spanish firm SelgasCano: It's a quasi-landscape of plants and diverse furniture...lightness and grace as well as invention, and an awareness of when to stop...stopping the playfulness short of kitsch, and engaging a multi-sensory awareness. By Rowan Moore \[images\]](#)- Observer (UK)

[Newman Architects Designs Virginia Library to be a Downtown Anchor: The new complex will improve Norfolk, Va., community members' access to technology...took six years to complete. It involved restoring a 115-year-old former customs house...converted into a library in 2009, and building a seven-story glass-walled addition. -- Tymoff+Moss \[images\]](#)- Architect Magazine

[Architects Aim to Make Us Healthier with "Irresistible Staircases" and Open Layouts: To build better and healthier spaces, architects are heeding evidence-based lessons: American Institute of Architects \(AIA\) announced...a three-year partnership among 11 architectural schools whose research programs will further explore the notion that building design, city planning and health should go hand in hand.- Scientific American](#)

[Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture Launches Fundraising Campaign: The campaign is the only opportunity to save the school...A pending accreditation loss due to bylaw changes established by the Higher Learning Commission \(HLC\) in 2012 forced the school to consider its options for remaking the institution.- Architect Magazine](#)

['Hogwarts' castle built for Chinese university: Turrets, spires and clock towers are all part of the Hebei Academy of Fine Arts building: ...will be used by animation students, rather than to house young witches and wizards. \[images\]](#)- Telegraph & Argus (UK)

[Architectural Review/AR Awards for Emerging Architecture 2014 Winner: Shingo Masuda + Katsuhisa Otsubo Architects; runners-up: Atelier Deshaus; CC Arquitectos/Manuel Cervantes Cespedes; CHROFI-](#) ArchDaily

[A' Design Award & Competition 2013 - 2014: Architecture, Building and Structure Design, Social Design Award, Futuristic Design Award, Landscape Planning and Garden Design Award, Urban Planning and Urban Design Award, etc. \[images\]](#)- A' Design Award & Competition

[Call for entries: Gowanus by Design 3rd international design competition: "Axis Civitas"; cash prizes; registration deadline: March 6, 2015 \(submissions due May 15, 2015\)- Gowanus by Design](#)



[-- An Interview with Christian Kerez: The Surreal Saga of Warsaw's Parade Square \[Museum of Modern Art\]: Vanguard architects who step onto the global stage...rarely air their trials and tribulations. Zurich-based Kerez is an outstanding exception to this rule.](#)

[-- Commune by the Great Wall, Beijing, China: ...a collection of buildings designed by a dozen architects... By Kevin Holden Platt -- Yung Ho Chang; Shigeru Ban; Kengo Kuma; Antonio Ochoa; Gary Chang; Seung H Sang](#)

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